that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons and would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.

(c) Does not arise in view of above.

(d) Government constantly reviews all developments that have bearing on India's security environment and is committed to taking all necessary steps to safeguard nation's security.

Impact of Tendu Leaves Policy on Beedi Workers

†1636. SHRI RK. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the impact of Tendu Leave Policy framed by the Madhya Pradesh Government on beedi workers;

(b) whether the beedi workers of the State have been benefited from this policy;

(c) whether the efforts made to protect these beedi workers from the exploitation have provided any relief; and

(d) the Central schemes for the beedi workers and whether they have been actually benefited from these schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI VIJAY GOEL): (a) and (b) Madhya Pradesh Government had decided to collect and trade tendu leaves through Co-operative societies since 1989. All the income from the trade of Minor Forest Produces including Tendu teaves is passed on to these societies who in turn distribute 50% of this net income as incentive wages to the gatherers of leaves. The balance amount is utilized for the development of forests, forest produce and infrastructures in the villages. This policy is applicable for tendu leaf collectors only. However, the beedi workers who are also collecting tendu leaves and are members of the co-operative societies are availing benefits under the tendu leave policy. From the infrastructure created at village level, all the villagers including beedi workers are benefited.

(c) Government have enacted Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 too protect the beedi workers from exploitation and the same is being implemented by the State Governments.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(d) Government is running a number of welfare schemes for beedi workers in the fields of health, social security, housing, education, and recreation and the beedi workers including their family members are availing benefits under these schemes.

Beedi Workers

†1637. SHRI RK. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of beedi workers in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, separately;

(b) the number of child and women beedi workers out of them; and

(c) whether Government have ever looked into the fact that benefits of the schemes meant for beedi workers reach to them, if not, the number of such cases detected, districts-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI VIJAY GOEL): (a) The number of identified Beedi workers in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra are 8,06,713,20,481 and 2,12,559 respectively.

(b) As per sample survey conducted by Labour Bureau in 1995, the nation-wise percentage of women and child worker in beedi industry is 65.9 and 1 respectively.

(c) Government has made all out efforts to ensure that the benefits of the welfare schemes meant for Beedi workers reach to the beneficiaries.

EPFO Investment in IDBI

1638. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Employees Provident Fund Organisation is seized of the impending merger of IDBI with the IDBI Bank;

(b) whether the EPFO has invested more than Rs. 3200 crores in IDBI bonds and if so, whether EPFO feels that the investment is safe even after the proposed repeal of the IDBI Act;

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.